



WAIKIKI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 9

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 530 SOUTH KING STREET ROOM 400 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96813
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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 8, 2006 WAIKIKI COMMUNITY CENTER

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chair Finley at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jo-Ann Adams, Tom Brower, Ray Gruntz, Mary Simpson, Jeff Apaka, Louis Erteschik, Bob Finley, Walt Flood, Jack Myers, Bert Benevinto, David Chen, Gerald Katahara, Jeff Merz, Mike Peters, Kevin McDonald (appointed at this meeting).

MEMBERS ABSENT: Les Among.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Jim Poole.

GUESTS: Mike Hu, Mary L., Nancy Bently, Debbie Hubl, Jerry Hubl, E. Hara, Grace Miller, George Melenka, Bill and Helen Sweatt, Kata Balassiano, Rick Piua, Lori Wingard (Councilmember Charles Djou's Office), Councilmember Charles Djou, Stefan, Emily Reed, Laura Millman, E. Lim, Capt. Ron Iwami (HFD-Waikiki Station), Lt. P. Loudermilk, Sgt. D. Nihei, Sgt. R. Hamasaki, (HPD-Waikiki Station), Mike Wilcox, Joan Nogawa (Waikiki Community Center), Helen Carroll, Carol Sword, Mary K., Madelyn Burgo, Eric La'a (Representative Scott Nishimoto's Office), Rick Egged (Waikiki Improvement Association), Marilyn Verner, Sonya Lee (Representative Anne Stevens's Office), Representative Anne Stevens, Rex Saunders, Frank Segun, Yujiro Kowabara, Joseph Otto (Diamond Head/Kapahulu/St. Louis Heights Neighborhood Board), John D., Senator Gordon Trimble, Keith Rollman (Mayor's Office), Marsha Weinert (Governor's Office), Taeyong Kim (Arlois Wedding Chapel), Dean Chu (Neighborhood Commission Office staff).

ESTABLISH A QUORUM: A quorum was present.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Chen reported for the month of July the Operating Account starting balance was \$1520.00, the current month's expenses were \$103.48, leaving a balance of \$1416.52, the Publicity Account starting balance was \$2941.00, the current month's expenses were \$208.00, leaving a balance of \$2733.00, the Refreshment Account starting balance was \$120.00, there were no expenses leaving a balance of \$120.00.

ELECTION FOR SUBDISTRICT 2 MEMBER: Apaka nominated Kevin McDonald to fill the vacancy. McDonald provided a brief background on himself.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. Peters and Merz supported McDonald to fill the vacancy.
2. Additional comments by McDonald followed on his support for local businesses and interest in keeping Waikiki beautiful.

There were no other nominations. **McDonald was elected by unanimous consent.**

CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chair Finley announced a one minute time limit on speakers would be imposed for this meeting. Flood will act as timekeeper.

CITY AGENCIES:

HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT – Lt. Loudermilk distributed written reports on crime and chronic complaint statistics and highlighted/added for the month of July, sexual offenses were down compared to June, and burglaries in July were up compared to June. Chronic complaints included 27 citations for loud mufflers, 17 citations for loud music, and 153 citations for illegal camping.



Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. Gruntz thanked the police for a response to a burglary case where the suspect was arrested.
2. Myers expressed concern about ongoing illegal drug activity. Lt. Loudermilk reported that there has been a focus on making arrests of big dealers, and that officers have to witness drug transactions taking place to make an arrest.
3. Myers suggested formation of a Weed and Seed District in Waikiki. Lt. Loudermilk will follow up with Myers on the process.
4. Getting traffic out of the Waikiki Shell area after an event is a higher priority than getting traffic into the Waikiki area as problems arise if persons are allowed to loiter in the area after an event.

Lt. Loudermilk was thanked for attending the meeting.

HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT – Capt. Iwami, from the Waikiki Station, reported the following:

1. Last month the station responded to 7 structure (a number involving overcooked food), 4 brush, 6 rubbish and 1 vehicle fire, 104 medical and 3 search and rescue calls. There were two major incidents: a) a fire at 2121 Ala Wai Boulevard, sixth floor, the cause is still being investigated, and b) a fire at 2424 Kapiolani Boulevard, sixth floor, the cause is still being investigated.
2. There has been a rash of deliberately set dumpster fires in the area, 20 since January, occurring between 3:00 – 5:00 a.m. There is concern that the setting of these fires could lead to something more serious. The public's assistance was requested in watching for suspicious activity.
3. Safety Tip. August is the start of a new school year. Be careful while driving near schools and be aware of students crossing the street. Take the time to teach your children how to cross the street safely and remind them to call 911 for emergencies.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. Myers thanked the department for its response to the fire at 2121 Ala Wai Boulevard. In response to Apaka, the cause of the fire is still under investigation.
2. Brower thanked the department for its work, including protecting the environment.

7:25 p.m.

BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY – No representative was present.

CITIZENS' ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SPREADING OF DISEASE – A resident expressed concern about the spreading of dust borne diseases, including hemorrhagic fever and toxoplasmosis, by the use of leaf blowers.

ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPORTS:

MAYOR'S OFFICE – Rollman, representing the Mayor's Office, reported construction of the temporary sewer by pass line has been completed. Phase II of the project, the microtunnelling for the line under Kaioulu Street will be completed by the end of the year. He apologized for the noise during the construction of the access shaft, the actual tunneling will not create a noise problem.

Responses to questions from the last meeting included:

1. Regarding a request for a left turn traffic signal phase from Kalakaua Avenue to Lewers Street, the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) reports that installation of a left turn signal phase would result in unnecessary delays to the progression of traffic and cause queing on Kalakaua Avenue, and does not recommend a left turn phase at this time. Dissatisfaction was expressed with this response as it is believed the lack of left turn phase caused the backups. Rollman will request a re-evaluation of the request.
2. Regarding a dust problem at a construction yard on Aloha Avenue, the two contractors using the site have been advised by the Department of Design and Construction of the dust complaint.
3. Regarding concerns about traffic flow on Kaiolu Street during the microtunnelling work, plans are to close one through lane on Kaiolu Street and one lane will be open at all times. Conversion of Launiu Street to two-way traffic as an alternate route is not necessary.
4. The bus only lane near the Hawaiian Monarch Hotel is a designated contra-flow lane for transit only and cannot be opened to regular traffic.
5. Ala Wai Boulevard between Kapahulu Avenue and McCully Street, will be resurfaced following completion of the emergency sewer by-pass project sometime in early 2007.
6. Faded traffic lane markings on Ala Wai Boulevard will be repainted by the end of the month. Rollman reported he will follow up on the repainting of the bicycle lanes markings.
7. In response to a suggestion, shower heads along Kuhio Beach and other locations will be welded on to deter theft.
8. The cost of the tree planting project on mauka and makai bound side streets, including Keoniana, Kuamoo, Namahana, Olohana and Launiu Streets, was \$1,023,885.00, the cost of removal was \$61,054.00. It was noted that drivers had damaged the trees.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. Myers requested that a representative from the Department of Transportation Services attend an upcoming Board meeting to answer questions on traffic problems from the Board and guests. Rollman will follow up.
2. Erteschik requested DTS recheck the bus only lane that begins at Keoniana Street by Keo's restaurant to improve signage that the lane is for buses only as a number of cars are seen using this lane or else open the lane to all traffic. Rollman will follow up.
3. Apaka requested the status of the new sewer line project. Rollman will follow up.
4. Adams suggested the traffic signal phasing at Ena Road and Kalakaua Avenue be adjusted so only pedestrians will be allowed to cross before other traffic is allowed.
5. Gruntz suggested lines be painted on the walkways at Ala Moana Beach Park to separate pedestrians from bicycle riders.
6. Gruntz questioned if glass is used in the asphalt road surfacing material.
7. Brower requested more prompt removal of abandoned cars, such as on Hobron Lane. The loss of parking spaces along the Ala Wai Canal has increased the demand for on-street parking in other areas. Rollman will follow up.
8. Sword noted tree branches are blocking traffic signal lights on Kuhio Avenue at Nohonani and Nahua streets. Rollman will follow up.

9. A resident problems with persons relieving themselves in a parking lot. Merz suggested the installation of public pay toilets as are used in some mainland cities. Rollman noted this is being considered and work is being done on a public – private partnership.
10. Carroll requested a left turn signal at Ala Wai Boulevard and Hobron Lane, currently there is only a right-turn signal. Rollman will follow up.

Rollman was thanked for attending the meeting.

COUNCILMEMBER CHARLES DJOU – Councilmember Djou reported Bill 84, relating to a limit on parades and street closures, comes up for third reading before the full Council on August 16. The bill places a limit of 39 events, consisting of 15 new parades, 10 Mayor's exemptions, 14 grandfathered, and no limit on first amendment events.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. Chair Finley noted the Board previously supported a limit of 38 events, and the consensus of the Board was that it supports 39 events.
2. A resident noted problems with noisy motorcycles and suggested police enforcement include checking motorcycles in the Street Bikers United parade in December noting many of the motorcycles are too loud.
3. Councilmember Djou noted Bill 84 takes effect in January 2007, and he anticipates a reduction in the overall number of events.

Brower expressed concern that any organization could claim their parade is a first amendment parade. Councilmember Djou noted there are specific requirements parades have to meet to qualify for this category.

4. Gruntz suggested there be a limit on development in Waikiki due to infrastructure concerns. Councilmember Djou noted that development cannot be stopped as long as developers have the appropriate zoning and other permits, and that there may be an increase in redevelopment rather than new development.
5. Erteschik noted Brunch on the Beach is a street closure event, while for Sunset on the Beach events no streets are closed and the event is outside the area covered by Bill 84.
6. Saunders requested clarification on when construction noise is allowed as he feels that 7:00 a.m. starts he has been experiencing are too early. It was noted the State Department of Health has jurisdiction on this matter and there are different types of permits and exceptions.

Councilmember Djou was thanked for attending the meeting.

8:00 p.m.

SENATOR GORDON TRIMBLE – Senator Trimble distributed his monthly report and highlighted/added the following:

1. He commended the Department of Heath for its proactive work on dealing with avian flu, West Nile Virus, etc.
2. There are plans to locate the Pacific Regional BioSafety Laboratory in Kakaako, next to the UH School of Medicine. He questions the location, which is in a tsumani inundation zone, and financial problems that prevented its establishment in Waimanu, not noted that having the lab can be an asset.
3. Results of a survey sent to his constituents included a majority of responding saying unnecessary noise from vehicles is a public nuisance.

4. Everyone was encouraged to vote in the upcoming election.

Questions, answers and comments followed;

1. A resident expressed concern about the use of mercury compounds as a preservative. Myers and Erteschik noted this concern came before the State legislature which passed a bill restricting the use of these compounds, but that the Governor vetoed the bill as there needed to be an option to have such vaccines if they are needed.
2. Persons who support legislation to better control noise problems need to testify at the legislature, as Senator Trimble noted just his saying the public wants something done is not enough, the public has to lobby and appear at hearings.

8:07 p.m.

REPRESENTATIVE ANNE STEVENS – Representative Stevens reported the following:

1. She attended a VASH (Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii) meeting and noted that this organization assists visitors who have become crime victims, and with other emergency assistance.
2. Gave recognition to Mahn Nguyen, a taxi driver and unofficial ambassador of Aloha who was murdered last month.
3. The Governor vetoed a bill restricting the use of mercury compound preservatives in vaccines as such a restriction would adversely affect the State's ability to stockpile vaccines.

There were no questions from the Board or guests. Representatives Stevens was thanked for attending the meeting.

REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT NISHIMOTO – Eric La'a, from Representative Nishimoto's Office, reported the following:

1. Area elected officials are sponsoring a mass transit town meeting, September 14, Washington Middle School Cafetorium, 6:00 p.m.
2. The annual community clean up will be held October 14, Kaimuki High School parking lot, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the Kapahulu Center, Kaimuki High School, and Moiliili Community Center.

There were no questions from the Board or guests. La'a was thanked for attending the meeting.

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE – Marsha Weinert, representing the Governor's Office, reported the following:

1. Visitor spending is up and this is predicted to be a record year.
2. This is hurricane season, everyone should have their emergency kits prepared.
3. The Governor is hosting the International Women's Leadership Conference, August 29, Sheraton Waikiki Hotel.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. Gruntz commended a worker at the Ala Wai Boat Harbor for his hard work.
2. Erteschik reported a standing water problem near the Dollar Rent A Car location on Kalakaua Avenue. Follow up will be done with Rollman.

3. Brower and suggested that since tax revenue is up, tax reductions should be made, such as removing the tax on food and drugs.
4. Benevento noted: a) that State tax exemptions are not keeping pace with federal tax exemptions, b) per a story seen on television, increasing spending on education does not necessarily result in desired improvements, c) water wasting is occurring at the Waikiki Library with watering the lawn being done at noon.
5. In response to Adams, the State is continuing to work toward greater energy independence, including local production of ethanol.

Weinert was thanked for attending the meeting.

8:20 p.m.

WAIKIKI IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION – Rick Egged, from the Waikiki Improvement Association, reported the following:

1. Members of the Hawaii Tourism Authority recently made a tour of Waikiki.
2. The Waikiki Business Improvement District funds an extra Honolulu Police Department patrol which has made drug and prostitution arrests.
3. Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii's services include helping not only visitors who are crime victims, but health and other emergencies.
4. Work is being done on requesting resurfacing of sidewalks to match those at the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center.
5. A new major sponsor is needed for Sunset on the Beach events. Approximately 15 events are planned for next year.
6. Hotel worker union negotiations are still continuing.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. The Waikiki Business Improvement District taxes Waikiki businesses to fund extra services such as extra police patrols.
2. Myers noted the need for public pay restrooms and suggested the Waikiki Improvement Association and the Business Improvement District pursue their development. Egged will follow up, but noted that there are problems with finding appropriate locations and cost for the development of such restrooms. Gruntz also suggested such restrooms be developed.
3. Merz noted the visitor industry is not providing benefits to the local community.
4. The Aloha Patrol is still being done on an infrequent basis, and there was no information on its full restoration.
5. Peters suggested signs be posted identifying the location of public parking. Egged noted signage restrictions prevent such signage, and noted that there are some 2,000 parking spaces available at special rates on weekends and evenings.

Egged was thanked for attending the meeting.

8:35 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS:

ARLUIS WEDDING CHAPEL – Taeyong Kim, representing Arluis, a company that conducts weddings on a commercial basis primarily for Japanese visitors, reported they are seeking support of a project to build a wedding chapel at Kaiolu Street and Kuhio Avenue. Planned is a two-story chapel on a 6,500 sq. ft. lot, with 2,500 sq. ft. per floor. The first floor would have two banquet rooms, for 14 and 28 persons respectively, restrooms, anterooms, and a warming kitchen for catered food. The chapel would be on the second floor which includes a landscaped lanai, restrooms, and anterooms. The lot's existing landscaping would be removed, new, extensive landscaping would be installed. There would be no perimeter walls or fences. Access would be via the existing driveway on Kaiolu Street, on site traffic would be limited to limousines for the wedding party, parking for guests would be off site, across the street at the Diamond Parking lot where space will be reserved. The height of the chapel with steeple, with an ornamental only bell, is 60 feet. The site is zoned for apartment – mixed use, with a height limit of 300 feet. An environmental assessment has been prepared. Plans are for no heavy equipment to be used during construction.

Most wedding party members and guests, primarily Japanese visitors, are expected to stay in area hotels and would walk or take a taxi to the chapel. Up to six weddings a day could be held. The size of the banquet rooms limits the size of the wedding parties, which typically number about 9 – 13 members.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. Erteschik noted the zoning allows for a commercial use that supports the needs of the local community. Kim noted the chapel meets this requirement as a personal services business.
2. Myers suggested: a) that the chapel be able to accommodate up to 60 persons at two weddings, b) the banquet rooms be available for use as a conference center. In response to a question, four off site parking spaces will be reserved at the Diamond Parking lot to meet the parking requirement.
3. In response to Merz, the environmental assessment will be published in the State Office of Environmental Quality Control on August 20. He also expressed concern about the aesthetics of the chapel's design as not fitting in Waikiki. In response to a question, if the commercial wedding chapel fails, it cannot be replaced by a regular church which needs to meet different requirements, including parking. Arluis owns this property and has been conducting its weddings in various churches around town.
4. In response to McDonald, the chapel is not affiliated with any particular religion.
5. In response to guests: a) access will be via the existing driveway on Kaiolu Street, b) guest parking will be across the street at the Diamond Parking lot, c) as shown in renderings there are windows on the back of chapel, d) air conditioning will be used to keep outside sounds such as traffic noise outside, and inside sounds inside, e) weddings will be conducted seven days a week, 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
6. In response to Gruntz, the roof of the chapel is 30 feet high, with the steeple reaching to 60 feet high. The chapel itself has a vaulted ceiling; the first floor does not have a vaulted ceiling.
7. In response to Brower, the chapel is the only plan for this site.
8. Egged noted that the zoning for this site allows commercial development, which includes a high rise.
9. Guests noted the chapel is out of place in this location, and in response to concerns: a) the chapel will be air conditioned and consideration will be given to the use of special glass to better contain sounds, b) no use of chimes or bells is planned, c) the banquet rooms are enclosed, d) access is via Kaiolu Street, e) there is a elevator and stairway inside, an outside stairway is for ceremonial use, f) no outdoor ceremonies are planned, g) the steeple is of a traditional design, h) there is no entrance at the back of the second floor.
10. In response to Adams, guests will be advised of where to park, and the chapel will be available for local weddings.

11. In response to Gruntz, no feng shui design has been incorporated.
12. In response to guests: a) the existing small banyan tree on site will be removed; a Conditional Use Permit has been obtained to accomplish this, b) traffic problems persist on this street with patrons of existing businesses blocking driveways, etc.
13. In response to Myers, four parking stalls will be reserved at the Diamond Parking lot across the street from the chapel.
14. Guests noted that hotels already conduct weddings, the chapel seems to be a duplication.
15. There are no alternate plans for this site.

Apaka moved and Benevento seconded that the Board support or oppose this project. Chair Finley noted a yea vote would support the project; a nay vote would oppose the project.

Discussion followed:

1. Benevento suggested alternate uses for this site.
2. Merz opposed the aesthetics, noting the chapel's design does not fit in, lacking a local style.
3. Brower requested a show of hands of guests on whether they favored or opposed the project, and was about equally divided.
4. Erteschik questioned the chapel as it does not seem to provide a service needed by the local community as required by the zoning.
5. Adams expressed concern about noise and traffic.

Motion was modified to support the project. Brower/Apaka agreement.

The Board voted 2-12-1, opposing the project. Yea: Gruntz, Chan. **Nay:** Finley, Adams, Apaka, Erteschik, Flood, Myers, Merz, Benevento. Simpson, Katahara, McDonald, Peters. **Abstain:** Brower.

Chair Finley deferred the remainder of the agenda. There were no objections.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

A candidates' forum for this area's City Council and House of Representatives seats followed the conclusion of the meeting.

Submitted by,

Dean Chu
Neighborhood Assistant